

Preparation for Puppies in Dog Shows

Learn how to start your puppy early into the dog show life.

Brought to you by Showing Your Dog! If you are lucky, your puppy will have received a little training from his breeder, especially if you have made it clear that you want to show. For many puppies destined for show homes, breeders begin gentle training, such as standing on a table, from the age of around six weeks. However, once you have collected your puppy, training becomes entirely your responsibility. Always remember that a well-trained puppy stands a much greater chance of success at shows.

Trained or not, when your puppy moves to his new home, your home, he will probably be thrown into confusion. In the first few days, training should be kept to a bare minimum, giving the youngster time to settle in. Introductions should be made to all who live in the home, giving the puppy the chance to get used to people, but please take care that nobody handles him roughly. Other pets in the household should also be introduced, but exercise caution as to the way they might react to one another.

Pre-Inoculation

Depending on the age of your puppy, his inoculation program may or may not be complete. Vaccines vary, and you must take the vets advice as to when your puppy can meet other dogs with full protection from disease. Don't be over-enthusiastic about socializing your puppy away from your home territory before the time is right. If the pups vaccinations are not complete and you have to take him to the vet for his final shots, please carry the pup, rather than walk him, into the vets clinic. If he is already too big for that, ask the vet to come out to your car.

The Early Weeks of Training

Training does not just involve practicing with your pup for performance in the ring. Teaching your puppy to enjoy grooming sessions is also very important, particularly if yours is a coated breed. Most dogs, if trained sensibly from an early age, will readily accept being taught to lie over on their sides. This is, of course, especially helpful for long-coated breeds, but it can make checking between the footpads, clipping toenails and inspecting ears considerably easier for dogs of any breed. Such training can also pay dividends when visiting the vet or when you need to apply eye or ear treatment.

Teaching a dog to lie on his side takes practice. To get started, you should stand your dog on a table (unless he is too large, in which case you will work on the floor). Grasp the upper part of the dogs legs on the side that is farther away from you and, leaning over him with your body, gently ease him down on his side. As soon as your dog gets to know what is expected of him, he will virtually roll over of his own accord, provided he has learned to associate the process with something pleasurable, such as a tummy rub.